

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0715
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MONTREAL

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OVIP (LEVY, DAVID), IS
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION AND ABSORPTION ON UNOFFICIAL
VISIT TO U.S.

1. DAVID LEVY, MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION AND ABSORPTION
AND FORMER HEAD OF THE LIKUD FACTION OF THE HISTADRUT,
IS DEPARTING JANUARY 19 ON EL AL 801 FOR A TWO WEEK
VISIT TO THE U.S. AND CANADA. HIS ETA NEW YORK IS 1330.
THE OBJECT OF HIS VISIT IS TO PERSUADE ISRAELI EMIGRANTS
NOW LIVING IN THE U.S. AND CANADA TO RETURN TO ISRAEL.
HE WILL ALSO MEET WITH LEADERS OF MOROCCAN AND RUSSIAN
JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN NEW YORK AND MONTREAL. THE
MINISTER HAS NOT REQUESTED ANY APPOINTMENTS OR COURTESIES,
BUT SAID IF HE CHANGED HIS MIND HE WOULD REQUEST
ARRANGEMENTS THROUGH THE ISRAELI CONSULATE IN NEW YORK.

2. LEVY, WHO SPEAKS HEBREW, FRENCH, AND ARABIC BUT NO
ENGLISH WILL ALSO MEET WITH JEWISH AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES
AND RECRUITERS PROMOTING EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL (SHLICHIM)
AND ISRAELI STUDENTS. HE WILL BE IN NEW YORK, JANUARY
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19-24, IN MONTREAL JANUARY 25-27, IN SAN FRANCISCO
JANUARY 27-29, IN LOS ANGELES JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 1,
AND STOP FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS IN LONDON.

3. THE MINISTER'S TRIP, HIS FIRST TO THE U.S., HAS
EVOKED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PRESS CRITICISM. IT HAS FOCUSED
ON TWO PRINCIPLE POINTS: HIS INABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH

AND THE POOR PROSPECTS FOR PERSUADING A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF EXPATRIATE ISRAELIS (YORDIM) TO RETURN AT THIS STAGE. GOI OFFERS OF SPECIAL INCENTIVES AND TAX PRIVILEGES SIMILAR TO THOSE GRANTED TO NEW IMMIGRANTS, HAVE ALSO BEEN WIDELY CRITICIZED.

4. THE MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL MEANCHEM SHARMAN TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE MINISTER WILL NOT DISCUSS THE SENSITIVE QUESTION OF HIAS AND OTHER AMERICAN JEWISH SUPPORT OF SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS WHO PREFER TO COME TO U.S. RATHER THAN TO ISRAEL. MOREOVER, BECAUSE OF THE TRIP SCHEDULE MINISTER LEVY WILL NOT ATTEND A MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 30 WITH THE HEAD OF THE JEWISH AGENCY, THE PRIME MINISTER, AND GENERAL HOREV TO DISCUSS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOREV REPORT WHICH CALLS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF HIS MINISTRY. THE FATE OF HIS MINISTRY, ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR GENERAL SHARMAN, WILL BE DECIDED AT THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY, AND THE MINISTER IS CONFIDENT THAT NO CHANGES WILL BE MADE.
LEWIS

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